



## **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update**

August 1 - 31, 2008

The following is a summary of Mexican wolf reintroduction project activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (ANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF), collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Reintroduction Area (BRWRA). Additional information can be obtained by calling (928) 339-4329 or toll free at 888-459-9653, or by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department Web site at <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf>. Past updates may be viewed on either Web site, or interested parties may sign up to receive this update electronically by visiting <http://www.azgfd.gov/signup>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The reintroduction project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA Forest Service (USFS), USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). Other entities cooperate through the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets quarterly in Arizona and/or New Mexico, including private individuals, organizations and tribes.

To view the weekly wolf telemetry flight location information or the 3-month wolf distribution map, please visit <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf>. On the home page, go to the “Wolf Location Information” heading on the right side of the page near the top and scroll to the specific location information you seek.

**Please report any wolf sightings or suspected livestock depredations to:** (928) 339-4329 or toll free at 888-459-9653. To report incidents of take or harassment of wolves, please call the AGFD 24-hour dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at 800-352-0700.

**Numbering System:** Mexican wolves are given an identification number recorded in an official studbook that tracks their history. Capital letters (M = Male, F = Female) preceding the number indicate adult animals 24 months or older. Lower case letters (m = male, f = female) indicate wolves younger than 24 months or pups. The capital letter “A” preceding the letter and number indicate alpha wolves.

**Definitions:** For the purposes of the Monthly Update, a “wolf pack” is defined as two or more wolves that maintain an established home range. The Interagency Field Team (IFT) recognizes that wolves without radio telemetry collars may also form packs. If the IFT confirms that wolves are associating with each other and are resident within the same home range, they will be referenced as a pack.

## **CURRENT POPULATION STATUS**

At the end of August, the collared population consisted of 22 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 12 packs and one single wolf. IFT members from the WMAT trapped and collared a female pup in August. This wolf is associated with the Bacho pack. Other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with wolves having radio collars, as well as being separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: The IFT has been actively monitoring wolf packs during the past several months in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. Based on monitoring information from the last 19 weeks, the IFT has determined that the following packs produced pups this spring: Hawks Nest, Paradise, Rim, Bacho, Dark Canyon, Middle Fork and Fox Mountain. The status of pup production is unknown for San Mateo, Bluestem, Lofer and Luna packs. The IFT will begin fall trapping activities in September to document pack status and pup recruitment.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806 and F1042)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Bluestem pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared M1044 and AF1110)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Hawks Nest pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF.

#### **Paradise Pack (collared AM795)**

Throughout August, AM795 continued to be located within the pack's traditional territory on the ASNF. The IFT has not documented any additional wolves or pups with AM795 since July.

#### **Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Rim pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

#### **M619 (collared)**

The IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF in Arizona during August.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

#### **Bacho Pack (collared AM990 and fp1154)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Bacho pack on the FAIR. The IFT documented pups with the pack. The IFT trapped and collared one female pup associated with this pack in August.

#### **Lofer Pack (collared AF1056)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Lofer pack on the FAIR.

### **IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Dark Canyon pack in its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

**Laredo Pack (collared AF1028 and AM1008)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Laredo pack in the Gila Wilderness on the GNF. A mortality signal AM1008 was noted on August 6, and the mortality is currently under investigation.

**Luna Pack (collared F1118)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the Luna pack in its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and F1115)**

The IFT located the Middle Fork pack on and adjacent to the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and central portion of the GNF throughout August. The IFT documented at least two pups with this pack in August.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)**

Throughout August, the IFT located the pack in the north-central portion of the ANF.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038)**

Throughout August, the IFT continued to locate the Fox Mountain pack in the northwestern portion of the ASNF and western portion of the ANF. The IFT documented at least three pups with this pack in August.

**MORTALITIES**

On August 6, the IFT located the carcass of AF1008 of the Laredo pack. Members of the IFT and law enforcement agents investigated the area and collected the carcass for necropsy. The mortality is currently under investigation.

**INCIDENTS**

In total, members of the IFT investigated two livestock injury incidents and ten potential depredation incidents in late July and August. The livestock injury incidents consisted of two different calves in two separate incidents. The IFT confirmed both injury incidents as wolf-caused. Both calves survived and no depredation incidents were assigned to any wolf. Of the ten depredation incidents, the IFT confirmed two as wolf depredations, one as a probable wolf depredation, one as being lightning-caused, two to be mortalities due to vehicle collisions, and the remaining four were determined to be mortalities of unknown causes. Summaries of the investigations are as follows.

On July 31, the IFT investigated a dead cow near Forest Road 117 near Greens Peak, Arizona. The investigation determined the cause of death to be unknown.

On July 31, the IFT investigated a dead cow near the Big Lake road in Arizona and determined the cause of death was the result of a vehicle collision.

On August 4, the IFT investigated a report of an injured calf near East Sand Flat, New Mexico. The IFT confirmed that the calf sustained wolf-caused injuries. The calf has not died, and no depredation incident has been assigned.

On August 7, the IFT investigated a dead yearling cow near Snow Lake, New Mexico. Wildlife Services (WS) personnel estimated the animal died on August 4 and confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation. The IFT assigned the incident to F1118 and an uncollared wolf associated with the Luna pack. This is the first incident assigned to F1118.

On August 12, the IFT investigated a dead calf near CC Flat, Arizona. WS personnel estimated that the animal died on August 9 and confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation. The IFT assigned the incident to an uncollared wolf or wolves.

On August 13, the IFT investigated a dead cow on the Big Lake road in Arizona and determined the cause of death was the result of a vehicle collision.

On August 15, the IFT investigated a report of an injured calf near Sand Flat, New Mexico. The IFT confirmed that the calf sustained wolf-caused injuries. The calf has not died and no depredation incident has been assigned. This is the same calf that sustained wolf-caused injuries on July 30. The IFT determined this to be a separate incident from the July 30 incident.

On August 18, the IFT investigated a dead cow near Pat Knoll, Arizona. WS personnel investigated the carcass and determined that the cow died from unknown causes.

On August 19, the IFT located three dead cattle near Canyon del Buey, New Mexico. WS personnel investigated the carcasses and determined that the animals died from injuries sustained from a lightning strike.

On August 22, the IFT investigated a chicken that was killed the prior day near Cruzville, New Mexico. WS personnel investigated and determined the incident to be a probable wolf kill. However, they noted there is a high level of domestic dog activity in the area, and the chicken could have been killed by a domestic dog.

On August 24, the IFT investigated a dead yearling cow near Snow Lake, New Mexico. WS personnel investigated and were unable to determine cause of death due to the advanced state of decay associated with the carcass.

On August 27, the IFT investigated a dead cow near Luna Lake, Arizona. The investigation determined that the cow died from unknown causes.

## **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

The Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP) and Reunion Binacional took place in Carlsbad, NM, on July 24 and 25. The mission of the Mexican Wolf SSP is to support the reestablishment of the Mexican wolf in the wild through captive breeding, public education and research. There are 47 institutions in the United States and Mexico that house over 330 Mexican wolves for this purpose. Representatives from each facility meet annually to discuss captive population status, current research projects, goals and other topics.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

The IFT continued to communicate and coordinate with members of the public and livestock operators. The IFT coordinated and participated in Legislative tour of the project, presenting information to one member of the Arizona State Legislature and one member of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Livestock permittee Cary Dobson also presented information to the tour regarding project efforts to address potential wolf impacts to his livestock grazing operations on the ASNF and personal deeded property.

IFT personnel presented an overview of project activities to 11 members of the public at the Big Lake visitor center on the ASNF.

## **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

AnnMarie Howser joined the project as the USFWS wolf biologist this month. AnnMarie has extensive carnivore research experience, including seven years in Africa working on cheetah and leopard management issues. Welcome to the project, AnnMarie!

Cheyenne Burnett joined the project as a USFWS volunteer on August 5. Welcome to the project, Cheyenne!

Ryan Gordon with the USFWS ended his special detail to the project this month. Thanks for all your hard work, Ryan!

## **REWARDS OFFERED**

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$10,000, the AGFD Operation Game Thief is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 and the NMDGF is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the conviction of the individual(s) responsible for the shooting deaths of Mexican wolves. A variety of non-governmental organizations and private individuals have pledged an additional \$40,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$52,000, depending on the information provided.

Individuals with information they believe may be helpful are urged to call one of the following agencies: USFWS special agents in Mesa, AZ, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, AZ, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, NM, at (505) 346-7828; the WMAT at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; AGFD Operation Game Thief at 1-800-352-0700; or NMDGF Operation Game Thief at 1-800-432-4263. Killing a Mexican wolf is a violation of the Federal Endangered Species Act, and can result in criminal penalties of up to \$50,000 and/or not more than one year in jail, and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.